

EXHIBIT B

Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
For the Southern District of New York

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

October 15, 2021

Dear Judge Castel,

My name is Ben Talmadge, and I am the Senior Pastor of Grace Church in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. I am writing on behalf of Virgil Griffith. Virgil's parents have been members of Grace Church for over 30 years, and it is the church in which Virgil grew up. It is also where Virgil regularly attended while he was recently living with his parents in Tuscaloosa.

I first began serving at Grace as an intern in 2002, which is when I first met Virgil. He struck me as a very intelligent young man, and we had a handful of faith-related conversations over the course of 2002-2003. I did not see Virgil again for about 10-12 years; in 2009 I married Anna Grace Bishop, who grew up with Virgil, and so he would often come by our house to see us whenever he visited Tuscaloosa.

While I am aware that Virgil has pleaded guilty to a federal crime, I would simply like to request for leniency and mercy in his sentencing. I saw Virgil numerous times at church gatherings while he was living in Tuscaloosa over 2020-2021 and believe that he was making a sincere attempt to accept the punishment for what he did and abide by the restrictions placed upon him. During the time he was living in Tuscaloosa he was faithful in attending our weekly corporate worship service and also participated in one of our church small groups. His participation in the life of our congregation also included times of serving others in various ways, from helping underprivileged families with practical needs to offering advice on how I could incorporate effective use of technology into my sermon delivery.

In addition to seeing Virgil at church gatherings, my wife and I and our two children were around Virgil in social settings multiple times over 2020-2021. He was always very pleasant to be around and also very engaging with my kids. Again, though Virgil has admitted guilt in committing a very serious federal crime, I do believe he has taken to heart the consequences he has experienced as a result of his actions. As a result, I would simply reiterate my request that mercy and leniency be applied as his sentencing is considered. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Ben Talmadge
Senior Pastor, Grace Church

October 15, 2021

Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York

RE: United States vs Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

My name is Fred Schuckert. I was in pastoral ministry for over 27 years. I am now in a ministry directed toward senior pastors in Tuscaloosa County, Alabama. I was Virgil Griffith's pastor for almost 15 years. While he was growing up, I spent countless wonderful hours with he and his family. His father and mother are very close friends with my wife and me.

In these last 15 years I have only interacted with Virgil a handful of times, when he was in town visiting his parents. However, over the last year, I have spent some evenings with him while he was restricted to his parent's home. There have been three areas of character where I have seen considerable growth in Virgil. One area of growth is in humility. He has been deeply humbled by his serious error in judgement with his North Korea trip and by the severity of the corresponding consequences. Another area of growth I have seen in him is in thoughtfulness. Virgil genuinely expresses interest in my family and ministry. When we have met, he always he wants to know how things are going in my world. He has also shown real concern for people whom we both know are struggling in life. A third area of growth I have seen in Virgil is his openness to the differing viewpoints of others. He really wants to understand why someone believes what they believe. He also finds ways to honor their prospective.

In my opinion Virgil has paid dearly for his wrongdoing. His work and life aspirations have come to a complete halt these last couple of years. There is much he must do to rebuild his life. To add additional punishment to what he has already served, seems too severe to me. What Virgil did was certainly wrong, but he is not a "criminal" nor a danger to society. To add additional sentencing on him at this point is beyond just, in my opinion. This is a good young man from a great family. He has much good he can do for others. Please consider leniency on his behalf.

I would be happy to correspond with you further concerning Virgil should you have any questions. Thanks for considering the content of this letter.

Respectfully,

Fred Schuckert

Director of the Tuscaloosa Pastors Network
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

November 11, 2021

Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel:

Virgil Griffith grew up going to Grace Church where I presently work as the Children's Ministry Director in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. Last year, while Virgil was out on bail and staying with his parents, Robert and Susan Griffith, he helped them teach in our Wednesday night kids' program. Robert and Susan taught the 4th & 5th grades multiple times during the Fall Semester 2020 and Spring Semester 2021 and Virgil joined them in the classroom on several occasions.

I was happy to see Virgil participate in the community and not just stay at home. He engaged with the kids really well and helped teach some of the science lessons we were working on. Virgil was helpful explaining concepts to the kids as well as connecting with them as people. I appreciated him taking the time and making the effort to be involved in our children's program.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'SG' followed by a long horizontal flourish.

Shannon Gray

Christof Koch, PhD

[REDACTED]
Seattle, WA 98125
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

March 2nd, 2022

Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York

Re: United States v. Virgil Griffith, 20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

It is my understanding that you will sentence Virgil Griffith in his criminal trial for violating the sanctions regime imposed against the government of North Korea. I would like to ask you to impose the most lenient sentence you consider appropriate. I know Virgil Griffith well as I was his doctoral advisor and mentor during his graduate studies at the California Institute of Technology (Caltech).

I was, from 1986 until 2013, a professor of biology and engineering at Caltech in Pasadena, California, one of the nation's foremost and most selective science and technology universities. I subsequently left the halls of academe to become the Chief Scientist and President of the Allen Institute for Brain Science, a not-for-profit research Institute in Seattle, funded by the Microsoft co-founder and philanthropist Paul G. Allen. In 2020, I stepped down from my presidential duties, becoming the Chief Scientist of the MindScope Program at the Allen Institute. I am also the Chief Scientist of the *Tiny Blue Dot Foundation* in Santa Monica. I am a scholar, having helped pioneer the modern study of the footprints of consciousness in the brain. I have authored more than 300 scientific papers, peer-reviewed articles and patents, five books concerning neuroscience, consciousness, computation, and natural and artificial intelligence, and have been cited more than 140,000 times.

Virgil came to the *Computation and Neural Systems* graduate program at Caltech in 2007 with a strong reputation in computer science. The program trains students with undergraduate degrees in physics, biology, engineering, and mathematics to investigate biological or artificial information processing systems, such as computers and brains. The program was the only one of its kind in the world and highly competitive, with only a small number of applicants (8-12) accepted each year.

It was Virgil's interests in complexity, circuits and conscious perception that led him to my laboratory one year after he entered the program. What was quickly apparent was his quick and nimble mind, his superb programming skills, his intellectual independence, a strong streak of utopianism, an anti-authoritarian ethos, and a belief that information should be free and widely accessible, not restricted to an elite. Thus, he shared his computer code widely with anyone.

Virgil applied his considerable skills in information theory to the problem of understanding how to formally define *synergy* within the context of a system of causally

interacting modules, such as interacting nerve cells or logical electronic circuits, as the information conveyed by a system that is more than the union of the independent parts. In so doing, he succeeded in defining a new mathematical measure and introduced a striking and very helpful graphical calculus to evaluate this measure. His primary published paper (Griffith V. & Koch C. "Quantifying synergistic mutual information". In: *Guided Self-Organization: Inception*. Prokopenko ed., pp 159-190, Springer, Berlin, 2014; <https://arxiv.org/abs/1205.4265>) has been cited close to two hundred times, which is uncommon for such an abstract concept.

Virgil graduated with a PhD in 2014, and turned his creativity and energy to other pursuits, in particular helping to build the Ethereum community that he envisioned as an arena for playing cooperative games (where all players can, under certain circumstances, win, in comparison with zero-sum games where one player's wins always come at the expense of the other players).

I was raised in a German academic tradition in which the doctoral supervisor is also known as *Doktorvater*, not with the legal meaning of *in loco parentis*, but in the sense that the professor and their student develop a life-long relationship in which the mentor continues to advise and help the mentee. This is the attitude I take with all my former graduate students. Although Virgil was very reluctant to take advice, we kept in touch; I wrote letters of recommendations for him; he sent me a number of whimsical gifts and logical puzzles, and we saw each other about once a year. Note that I have no informal or formal roles in Ethereum Foundation or any of the other organizations that Virgil was active in.

Virgil is an intensely curious, playful, and fair-minded individual, open to the world, willing to help others without a reward, without a malevolent bone in him. He is a libertarian and utopian, believing, perhaps naively, in a world without borders and restrictions.

I understand the gravity of the federal crime Virgil has admitted to. However, I am convinced that Virgil did not intend to cause harm to the United States of America. The Virgil I am acquainted with is not bad-intentioned. This is the reason that I have kept in touch with Virgil, via phone and *CorrLink*, since his arrest in November of 2019, that I offered to testify on his behalf as a character witness, and that I'm keeping him supplied with books (such as the text that has helped me during challenging times, Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*). Virgil is fundamentally a good person. I therefore urge clemency for him.

Sincerely,



Christof Koch, PhD

Chief Scientist, MindScope Program, Allen Institute, Seattle

Chief Scientist, Tiny Blue Dot Foundation, Santa Monica

Affiliate Professor, Department of Biology, University of Washington, Seattle

Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

I am Vitalik Buterin, founder and Chief Scientist at the Ethereum Foundation, and the person responsible for the decision to hire Virgil to work at Ethereum.

I first met Virgil in Los Angeles in late 2013, shortly before the Ethereum project started. At the time I was a researcher and writer at Bitcoin Magazine, and I had spent the last few months visiting various communities around the United States and Europe who were interested either in Bitcoin itself, or in the mathematical and academic ideas in distributed consensus. He reached out to me expressing interest in my ideas, and when I mentioned that I was coming to LA he welcomed me into his home, introduced me to his friends at Caltech, and set up an opportunity for me to give a presentation and interact with the local professors and students.

A few years later, in 2016, I went to Singapore for the first time, to get in touch with the local community and set up the Ethereum Foundation's Asian branch. I learned that Virgil had also moved there. When I asked why, he told me that he was fascinated by what he saw as a clearly very successful country, but one with a very different culture from what he was used to in the United States. He was curious, and wanted to understand the place on its own terms. Just as before in LA, he put a lot of effort into introducing me to the city, putting me in touch with the most interesting locals, and helping me along as I set up the Asian entity.

After that point, we started to grow closer, and he began trying to more actively participate in Ethereum, with no expectation of return. He and I co-wrote the Casper FFG paper, an academic paper that describes a key technology behind Ethereum's upgrade to "proof-of-stake", which will allow the blockchain to become thousands of times more efficient and environmentally friendly. He tried to introduce the best parts of academic culture to me and our writing, and the best parts of Ethereum to the academic community. Two years later, I would recommend that Virgil officially join us as a full-time contributor. Virgil at first resisted, finding the salary not worth the risk that a formal relationship would somehow damage our friendship, but I eventually convinced him to agree.

Virgil has always struck me as someone who is very intelligent, but also someone who is very kind and who deeply values cooperation and peace. He impressed me the most with his eagerness to reach out and attempt to genuinely understand different people and cultures,

always with the goal of trying to bring them together and find ways for everyone to benefit. As he describes it, his primary goal is to help people play “positive-sum games”.

Some examples of this behavior:

- He reached out to the core developers of Ethereum Classic, a blockchain whose community originally separated from Ethereum over highly acrimonious and hostile disagreements on values and philosophy. He made friends with them, and found ways that the two communities could collaborate on software development despite their differences. He even arranged speakers from both blockchains to speak at each other’s conferences.
- He reached out to enterprise users from many industries - a community that the Ethereum Foundation has historically had weak links to. He helped to discover ways for them to use Ethereum productively, and encouraged them to work together on actually building the tech out.
- He made many repeated attempts to build bridges between the Ethereum community and the traditional academic world. He continually attempted to convince researchers from universities and elsewhere to think about Ethereum-related problems, and convince people in the Ethereum research community to engage with them and take their contributions seriously.
- He arranged discussions with Amanie Advisors, a firm specializing in Islamic finance solutions. He and they worked together to determine whether or not Ethereum was compatible with Islamic finance law, in the hopes that a positive answer would make it easier for the Islamic world to use Ethereum. The effort was successful.

His values of seeking cooperation and peace, even with groups that some of his friends and co-workers might be suspicious of, did not always win him friends. While he was actively participating in the Tor internet privacy project, he alienated many in his community because of his willingness to work with Interpol and often assist their requests. And yet he continued, because he believed that finding a path to work cooperatively with the existing world, and not fighting head-on against it, was the right thing to do.

His efforts have left a lasting legacy in the Ethereum Foundation, and the wider community. We have regular interactions with research groups from multiple universities, including those in Singapore that Virgil contributed heavily to establishing the connection with. Virgil founded an economics research team at the Ethereum Foundation called the Robust Incentives Group, which are now key contributors to our economic research. Finally, the culture of the Ethereum Foundation itself has changed, and we are now constantly on the lookout for unexpected opportunities to make friends in a way that we were not before.

He has also left some deep personal changes in myself. His attitudes and actions over the years helped to foster an open-mindedness and an orientation toward cooperation that guide my actions to this day, in a way that was absent from my personality five years ago. Whether it’s Singapore, or blockchain enterprise users, or the academic community in the United States, the communities that Virgil introduces me to are always something I’m grateful for.

In the communications I have had with Virgil since he was arrested, he has repeatedly expressed how he has come to understand that his actions on his trip to North Korea were a great mistake. They were not just a violation of the law, but also deeply counterproductive to his own values. He now has a much better understanding of the complexities and wisdom involved in successfully making allies and friends, and what it takes to not end up going against the noble goals that he set out to accomplish.

Virgil is eager to accept the wisdom of his experiences and once again get a chance to productively contribute to society. Both he and I would deeply appreciate him being given an opportunity to do so soon.

Vitalik Buterin
Director, Ethereum Foundation
2021.12.13

Wan Tong
[REDACTED]

Nov.15.2021

United States v. Virgil Griffith

20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Honorable Judge Castel,

My name is Wan Tong. I am a Procurement Department head in the biggest Squishmallow Toy Company in America. I have known Dr. Virgil Griffith about 9 years. When I traveled to Pasadena, back in 2013, I met him at California Institute of Technology.

I worked very hard as a professional procurement expert in Los Angeles and pursued a doctor degree in business administration at the same time. I gradually became very stress, and I sobbed till I fell asleep in the middle of the night! At the time, Dr. Virgil Griffith was already a well-known blockchain scientist who lived in Singapore, and he traveled all over the world for his science projects. He constantly gave me endless support after he realized my position. As a friend, no matter how busy he was or where he was, even in the middle of the night, he was constantly concerned about individuals and their well-being. His kindness and encouragement aided me in completing my studies and securing a brighter future.

I was moved to tears by his incarceration, and I truly thought he did not make this mistake in propose. Dr. Virgil Griffith voiced to me tremendous regret as well as a strong willingness to rectify the misconduct. Facing the aftermath of one's doing is often tough, and he was ready to get through that for a better future, as he repented his misdeeds. Since he's already proceeded to acquire a foreign language, read many useful literatures, and taught himself on international trade law in prison, I believe Dr. Virgil Griffith has every intention of fixing what he has torn apart. He's always been a kind gentleman who strives for personal growth, compassion, and serenity. I'm confident that Dr. Virgil Griffith will make the most of this and return to become a robust spectacular figure - a remarkable blockchain scientist in America.

Thank you so much for your time and I hope that my letter addressing Dr. Virgil Griffith and his situation will be considered by the court as a favorable contributory factor in this plea.

Sincerely,

Wan Tong

**United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)**

On the Character of Virgil Griffith

Author's Address

[REDACTED]
Homewood, AL 35209

Author's Cell No.

[REDACTED]

Author's Email Address

[REDACTED]



October 19, 2021

Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
For the Southern District of New York

Dear Judge Castel,

I, Lauren Roberts, write this letter to support and speak to the character of my friend, Virgil Griffith.

I work in Birmingham, AL as a psychiatric nurse practitioner with United States military veterans. Prior to earning a master's degree, I worked for three years as a registered nurse on an inpatient adolescent psychiatric unit. I am a single mother to an 11 year old daughter.

Virgil and I met through a mutual friend. What initially struck me about Virgil is his inclusive, altruistic nature and inquisitive, visionary mind. Virgil is the most generous, nonjudgmental human being I've ever encountered. Virgil has offered many times, with no expectation of return, to help me in a variety of ways. I generally decline his offers and have told him many times, I simply enjoy his friendship. I'm certain I could ask most anything of Virgil and he would gladly assist me. I have told him that I worry some people might take advantage of his kindness. Indeed, Virgil has told me of incidences when people took advantage of his

October 19, 2021

Page 2 of 2

On the Character of Virgil Griffith

Author: Lauren Roberts

generosity, but never did he seem the least bit resentful. He only seemed to lament those persons' predicaments.

I have met a homeless man whom Virgil befriended; Virgil helped this man with back child support, stable housing, and encouraged him to earn a GED. I am perpetually awed by Virgil's visionary outlook; he seems to constantly formulate ideas for improvement (e.g. in persons, societies, businesses).

Virgil has a soft spot for any life, human or otherwise, that has been undervalued. Virgil and I have discussed how the United States mental healthcare system could be improved. I expounded on my experiences in the field of psychiatry. He described a time he volunteered with mental health patients. Virgil once told me about a group of slugs he cared for while living in Singapore. These slugs lived near his residence; he would move them to prevent their being tread on by pedestrians. This is the kind of person Virgil is. He cares for lives that have been overlooked and small lives that can be unknowingly trampled upon. He is a people lover, an animal lover, a lover of life.

Virgil and I have discussed the value of diversity in society and the beauty of second chances for those who have made mistakes. I now remind Virgil to give himself a second chance as his remorse, shame, and embarrassment regarding his case has obviously and profoundly affected him. I remind him that human beings are bound to operate within our epochs, but we are more than our mistakes and our current contexts. I know Virgil to be a person of outstanding character and a kind-hearted soul. I respectfully ask for your leniency when considering his sentencing. He has many positive contributions to make to this world.

Sincerely,

Lauren Roberts



Friend of Virgil Griffith

Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel:

How are you?

My name is Huaiyue, I'm a Ph.D. international student at the University of Alabama, majoring in Educational Leadership. I'm writing you this letter on Virgil Griffith's behalf. I'm aware that he pleaded guilty to a federal crime, but he was and still be one of the people who I deeply respect and love. He is the nicest, sweetest, and most genuine person I have ever met in my life.

Virgil and I met through a friend, and he showed great empathy to my situation which touches me a lot during the pandemic. Then I made a close relationship with him and his family, they are all very nice to me. I truly believe it is a God thing to have him in my life. I sincerely appreciate his kindness to me. That means a lot, and he helped me pass through the most difficult year of my life, when I cannot go home and had no families around, and when I lost my school job during that time. So he is family to me. And Virgil also is a mentor to me. When I had difficulty with school work, he inspired me, enlightened me with great ideas, and encouraged me to stick to my goal and not to give up. I can tell he is the kind of person who truly cares about people even when he himself is going through difficulty. Every time it's heartbreaking to see how he blamed himself for making such a mistake, I could never forget when he cried to me how regretful he was and how scary he was. I believe he's paying a heavy price for what he did.

Dear Judge Castel, please give him the lowest sentence permitted under the law, and please show him hope and light. Truly appreciate your kindness.

Sincerely,

Huaiyue Zhang

Phd Student, Educational Leadership
Graduate Assistant for CrossingPoints Program

[The University of Alabama](#)

Phone [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

 **WHERE LEGENDS ARE MADE™**

November 1, 2021

Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York

United States v. Virgil Griffith, 20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel:

I am Henry Strickland, a Senior Software Engineer at Google for the past 14 years, with degrees in Electrical Engineering (1983) and Computer Science (1989) from Georgia Tech.

I first met Virgil Griffith at a conference when he was in high school, and was quite impressed with the young man. I've gotten to know Virgil well, as we have visited each other frequently throughout his college years and ever since, and I consider him one of my best friends. We have lots of interests in common, including Computer Science, Cognitive Science, and Mathematical Cryptography.

I'm not the only one impressed by Virgil: he tends to know the top luminaries in his fields of interest, and usually ends up working for or with them. He worked for the cognitive scientist Douglas Hofstadter at Indiana University, whose books made a big impression on me when I was an undergraduate. At Caltech he worked with his advisor Christof Koch, who is usually interviewed in any documentary about Consciousness. As a researcher at the Santa Fe Institute, Virgil was a favorite of Murray Gell-Mann, who received the 1969 Nobel Prize in Physics. And he works with the prodigy Vitalik Buterin at the Ethereum Foundation. I've had the pleasure of meeting all of them except Mr. Gell-Mann, and hearing Virgil discuss ideas and interact with them.

But since I know him closely, I'd like to tell you about what I think is unique and special about Virgil.

Virgil is gentle, kind, and generous. He keeps his family and his network of friends in mind. Sometimes he tells me of his plans of unique gifts for various people. For one friend, he was commissioning an oil painting of that friend's pet parrot. He enjoys helping those who are younger or less experienced, like students we meet at conferences. He also looks out for people like me who are older, giving advice and assistance in directions that he thinks will help us. Sometime this is by connecting us with other amazing people that Virgil knows, or suggesting job openings to us. If you share common interests with him, he'll do what he can to help you.

Virgil has high morals and is honest to a fault. His projects always involve an interest in making the world a better place. And he has enough confidence in himself that he sees no need for dishonesty or deception. At first I was a little surprised how he shares things publicly. In many ways his life is an open book, to be followed as a model by others.

Virgil believes that science and technology will make the world a better place. For example, he's always suggesting medical technology, perhaps because both of his parents are medical doctors, and it is easy to see how medicine has improved the world for humanity. Virgil embraces the academic culture of publishing and sharing information, so that we can all benefit by improving on each other's work. When he was in college, I helped proofread a paper of his ("Messin' with Texas"), for which he won the Best Undergraduate Paper award in its conference. That paper exposed serious problems related to Identity Theft, and banks soon changed their practices.

Virgil and I may disagree on some details, but we share a lot of values, and his approach to life is a model for me. I hope you can see that Virgil has been a clear, positive influence on my life and on many others. It's clear to me that Virgil regrets what he has done, and I hope you can exercise leniency in sentencing him.

Sincerely yours,
Henry Strickland

**Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York**

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

My name is David Bailey, CEO of BTC Inc and Bitcoin Magazine. I'm writing to you today because I want you to know more about my friend, colleague, and schoolmate, Virgil Griffith.

I've known Virgil since we were both at The University of Alabama. He was an incredibly bright student and developer, and a quiet but kind person. He stood up strongly for what he believed in, and he was principled to a fault.

We both entered into the same industry when we graduated; the cryptocurrency industry. He became an incredibly successful entrepreneur, and helped build Ethereum from the ground up. Ethereum is now the 2nd most valuable cryptocurrency in the world, and supports trillions of dollars of global economic activity.

I have been in constant awe of his drive, integrity, and lack of ego, both personally and professionally.

I am aware he has pleaded guilty to a federal crime, and I am not writing to convince you of innocence. I only want to tell you that I think Virgil has positively given so much to the world in his short professional career, and I want to see him be able to continue to help make the world a better, freer place for all people.

Please be lenient and show mercy on my friend. He is a good man, and the world is already a better place because of him.

Sincerely,



David Bailey

**Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York**

**United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)**

Dear Judge Castel,

Virgil Griffith is a long-time friend and colleague of mine. I first came to know him during our shared time working for the Ethereum Foundation, and his advice and help was crucial when I joined the EF, and as I was developing ENS, which is now a major independent project. Virgil possesses a rare combination of technical insight and ambition that has served the projects he has advocated for well, and he has a history of taking on “moonshot” projects that seem far-fetched to most. The example of this that stands out to me was his successful efforts working with Muslim scholars to have Ethereum declared “Halal”. Virgil’s empathy for others, and his excitement in helping them succeed, has made him a good friend as well.

I understand that Virgil has pled guilty to the crime of which he was accused. I believe he is truly remorseful for his actions, and that they arose out of a misguided attempt to do good in the world - another “moonshot”. While I was dismayed to hear of what he did, and while his actions were foolhardy in the extreme, these events do not diminish my esteem of him; I believe he is a flawed but ultimately praiseworthy individual who still has much potential to do good in the world - hopefully with more caution but no less enthusiasm.

I respectfully ask that the court consider the lowest appropriate sentence for Virgil.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Nicholas Johnson', with a stylized, flowing script.

Nicholas Johnson
Founder, Ethereum Name Service

Dimitri Dimoulakis

[REDACTED]
Dallas, TX 75201
[REDACTED]

30 November 2021

Honorable P. Kevin Castel

United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

My name is Dimitri Dimoulakis. I am a lifelong computer programmer and traveller. I am currently residing in Texas after living in Berlin for several years, and previous to that I spent 15 years in your remarkable city.

I met Virgil only once at a 2600 conference a few years back. I doubt he remembers me or our encounter, but I've always remembered it.

He came over and sat down near me at a communal table and took out a computer. As a way of making smalltalk, I asked him what he was working on. He responded in a friendly and inviting way, explaining that he was playing around with genetic algorithms and had constructed a graphical simulation to better visualize how the algorithm evolved. As one does.

This guy was far ahead of me and I badly wanted to watch what he was doing, so I nervously asked if it would be ok for me to look over his shoulder. Not only was he happy to let me do so, he went out of his way to explain what was going on and help me get caught up. Along the way, we made various smalltalk where he came across as a nice friendly guy who just assumed that a regular guy (me) was on his same intellectual level.

And the whole time, he's sitting there absentmindedly writing code that - even now - is still over my head.

I don't use words like "genius" very often. But I'm not sure how else I would describe Virgil. I've met other smart people, but it is a rare and extraordinary individual who is able to not only run circles around me intellectually, but carry me along for the ride.

I have always remembered that weekend, and can only hope that others are able to meet the same kind, inspirational individual whom I was lucky enough to meet. I have no doubt that Your Honor can see that as well, and can understand how a good, well-intentioned person can make a naive mistake. Please consider not only Virgil's future, but the overall benefit to humanity he has contributed both to myself and to countless others. Imposing anything in excess of the lowest sentence permitted under the law is an overall loss for society.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'D' followed by a horizontal line and a vertical line.

Dimitri Dimoulakis

**Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York**

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

My name is Emily Tsay, and I am a very good friend of Virgil Griffith. I have known him since 2009 when we were both students living in Southern California. After my immediate family, he is one of the most important people in my life. I think he would say the same about me.

I am a former teacher of elementary, middle, and high school, and previously worked for a non-profit focused on developing resilience in at-risk kids through mindfulness and character education. Currently, I work as a senior product manager for an education technology company, focused on developing student voice through multimedia creation. And, because of [*or “due in large part to,” as the case may be*] Virgil, I work part-time at the Ethereum Foundation providing leadership support.

Over the course of the last 13 years of knowing Virgil, he has done so much for me that has changed the trajectory of my life. He is such a rare and exceptional friend because he has a combination of compassion, creativity, and generosity that he applies to all his friendships, and even people he has just met!

I know in this letter I should probably just stick to the unquestionable positive aspects of Virgil, but somehow I cannot write about Virgil without acknowledging the full spectrum of Virgil—and that includes having a penchant for wacky ideas. For example, while at the Ethereum Foundation, he came up with the idea of *cloning* a famous Shibu Inu dog ("The Doge") for the purposes of gifting cloned Doges to other blockchains as a kind of peace offering. But this playful and even silly side is just one part of Virgil. He also was responsible for some incredibly impactful ideas, including a partnership with Microsoft that got them to create an entire team to work on developer tooling for Ethereum. This work created a long lasting impact for the technology, and shows Virgil promising potential to make positive contributions to the world when he is able to re-enter it.

Virgil's oddball and deeply impactful sides have shown in my own life. I'll start with a wacky idea first: a few years ago, he told me with all apparent sincerity that he could imagine me as a spiritual guru. Even this seemingly silly idea had a meaningful side to it; he told me he believed in me and could see people relying on me and following my advice. But it was a funny idea, too. Just to paint you a picture, I am a quiet, introvert, whose voice sounds like I am a young child though I am 36, and who never talks much about spirituality. It felt so off the wall, and out of place, that I even got frustrated with him! That part of his personality, however, coexisted with a deeply thoughtful and selfless willingness to extend himself for others. Virgil has been a significant donor in a education nonprofit that I worked for. And he wrote a recommendation letter which garnered me a full scholarship to UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business. When I was feeling a ton of self-doubt, Virgil encouraged me to work at the Ethereum Foundation. Now, I am there doing fulfilling and meaningful work.

Throughout our conversations since being in prison, I know that Virgil is deeply remorseful for his actions. He has been very reflective while in prison and so I know he will come out as a more thoughtful and mature person. I look forward to that day, because someone with Virgil's heart and creativity will no doubt be a net positive on people's lives and the world.

To end on a lighter, but poignant, note: years after I got frustrated with Virgil about suggesting I become a "guru," my wise dad told me one day—out of the blue—that he also thinks I could be a spiritual advisor, too. My dad had no idea that Virgil had said the same thing, years before. Now I am actually entertaining some variation of this idea, inspired by Virgil's original provocation, through empowering children to become creatively confident. As this story shows, Virgil's "wacky" ideas sometimes hold more wisdom than is first apparent—because somehow, he can see the potential of people and organizations, long before they even begin to realize it.

I sincerely appreciate you reading and hope this helps give a fuller picture of Virgil Griffith.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Emily Tsay". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Emily Tsay

This letter is not only for you Judge Castel, but for whoever ears are listen.

When I meet virgil I was at the lowest point of my life. I was homeless and working off tips. I meet virgil at the waffle house I greeted him I said welcome to waffle House and continued as his server. What I didnt realize was that my whole life was about to change for the better. After talking to him for awhile virgil took interest in what stressed me out and those things made me want to give up in life I remember virgil asking me what are some goals you have in life. I remember telling him my goals dont matter I cant reach them. Virgil almost didnt finish eating because he immediately was concerned. From that day virgil stood by me a stranger who he knew nothing about. He coached me threw ~~his~~ my mental problems and thoughts. When I called virgil and explained to him bad ideas or going threw my head He showed me good in it. Virgil told me that my bad thoughts only make room for more bad and that being positive and staying focused on my goals take the bad thoughts away.

Virgil worked hard with me with the little space he had to give. even when I made the same mistake He reacted with love never anger He walked me through the Steps of Remaining Stable. Virgil pushed me to get my education and it was a success "G.E.D" now I'm license Barber He got me involve with his family loving Church. We tracked down every ticket and blemish on my record then He Help my gain back access to my license now I dont have to look over my shoulder when I drive witch made it possible for me to be a better Father to my two son's now my two boys have a weed free Father and not only for me he does these things Countless times I have seen him in hero mode even if it was helping a homeless lady eat. Virgil see's the good in everyone expt. spiders they make him jump. I'll never forget virgil telling me "you know I could've just paid you out and I said why did you go threw the storm and Rain with me if it was that easy Virgil Said" because me paying you out or dept only solves the problem temporary. but If I teach you the Skill it will last a life time. I'll never forget that

p③

I will teach my son by that law
so if I'm gone they will still stand
but truly I can say I'm a better
person to the world. I swear by
my son's life ~~and~~ ^{and} everything in me
that Virgil showed me real friendship
and love to be honest he saved my
life. He also use to tell me
I find joy in helping other's
never once have he showed me
anything different. Virgil also said
"Eugene do you realize you pulled
85% of yourself out of this"
but no matter what virgil is the
Real hero in me and my family life
Virgil went from friend to family
and on that note about family. He's
truly been better to me then blood
he even housed me when I was
to cold gave me clothes off his back
socks so my feet could be warm
I Really Can keep going. but
me, my family and friends miss him
dearly. not only can we see his
heart we felt the Real love.
Brave of you to step in my kind
of community ~~was~~ just to come
help us. My prayers are strong and
I know God see a righteous heart
and I know virgil stick out like a
sore thumb Thank you for listening
Judge Castle

Albert Ni
San Francisco, CA
January 18, 2022

Dear Judge Castel,

My name is Albert Ni. From early 2018 through 2020, I focused on operations and strategy at the Ethereum Foundation, where I worked closely alongside Executive Director Aya Miyaguchi and Chief Scientist Vitalik Buterin. I decided to dedicate years of my life to these efforts due in no small part to Virgil Griffith, after meeting and spending several days with him in Singapore in 2017. I don't know anyone quite like Virgil. He has a brilliant but unfocused mind, and his penchant for creative, thought-provoking ideas is in constant tension with a serious naïveté about the practical world. I'm writing to share some thoughts about the mistakes Virgil has made, and the potential he has for the rest of his life.

Earlier in my career, I was the fifth employee at Dropbox -- a software startup at the time that went on to go public in 2018. Before Dropbox, I studied mathematics and computer science at MIT. In 2016, I initially became intrigued by Ethereum due to its technical challenges. As I learned more, I became convinced of Ethereum's potential when I saw how programmable, decentralized blockchains are an extension of the same principles underlying freedom of speech and association. These values are critical to me as a mathematician, scientist, and most of all, someone who recognizes he had a far better childhood than his parents, in large part because I grew up in America, whereas they grew up in China.

During my time at the Ethereum Foundation, Virgil was encouraged to run ideas by me because I valued his creativity and had the patience to be one of his direct contacts. Patience was required because Virgil has no filter, and sometimes has poor judgment. I tried to encourage his good ideas (of which there were many) and talk him out of his bad ideas.

At one point, Virgil asked what I thought about him potentially visiting North Korea. I candidly told him it was a horrible idea and urged him not to go. My parents grew up in China, and had first-hand experience with what North Korea is still like today, sadly. Frankly, I found Virgil's naïveté about North Korea and the cruelty of their regime to be borderline offensive.

As one might imagine from that anecdote, Virgil could be frustrating to work with. But he could also be a fascinating thinker and a joyful colleague. His strengths weren't on the technical side of things, but in his higher-level ideas. To take one example, Virgil was the first person I knew to raise the idea of working with Islamic scholars to classify Ether as halal. Virgil also proposed cloning Kabo-chan, the real-life dog who originally inspired "the Doge", a popular Internet meme in the early 2010s that later, remarkably, became even more widespread within both crypto and mainstream culture in the form of the Dogecoin cryptocurrency. Virgil's proposal was to give the puppies (yes, real life puppies -- he even negotiated a contract with a Texas-based animal cloning company pending approval from Kabo-chan's owner) to leaders of other blockchain projects (like Bitcoin) as, in his words, "a gesture of peace and unity." These examples show the range of his thinking, and how it tended to pivot around his conception of making the world a kinder, better, and more interconnected place.

Virgil often reminded me of a promising but underachieving teenager: good at heart, too mischievous for his own good, and sometimes motivated more by provocation and entertainment than by sound judgment. I do not say this to excuse his misconduct or justify his poor choices. Rather, I want to underscore that, with the capacity for personal growth that we all

have, Virgil has the potential to double down on his considerable and sometimes unique strengths and address his weaknesses.

Like many others of us who came to know Virgil in ways big or small, I feel invested in his future. And based on the occasional updates I have received from an email list that Virgil's father started for a long list of his friends and acquaintances, I do believe Virgil has learned an extremely difficult but ultimately helpful lesson.

I'll end with one more memory of Virgil. It was at the 2018 edition of Devcon, an annual conference hosted by the Ethereum ecosystem. I saw Virgil there for the first time in a few months. We had recently had some contentious discussions about the balance between encouraging his creativity and recognizing his responsibility to the Ethereum ecosystem, as someone who was perceived as a leader within that community. I knew he was upset about some of the things I had said when chastising him, and perhaps rightfully so. But when I saw him, he didn't flash any anger or show any coldness, as I feared he might. To the contrary, he produced a thoughtful gift he had gotten just for me, and gave me a hug.

That, ultimately, is who Virgil is. Back in my more traditional Silicon Valley job, where I hired hundreds of people and fired my fair share too, I experienced first-hand how the technology world is a colorful place. I've had the misfortune of working with borderline sociopaths. I've also been fortunate to work with and be inspired by truly kind, good-hearted, and selfless people who genuinely seek to make the world around them a better place. Virgil is far more like one of these people than the vast majority of the people I've worked with over the years. I have no doubt Virgil will seize his second chance at doing good in the world. I hope to again have the opportunity to learn from a humbled, more mature version of him someday soon.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,


Albert Ni

2 March 2022

Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court for the Southern District of New York

RE: United States v. Virgil Griffith 20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel:

I am writing in support of Virgil Griffith, Ph.D. who has pleaded guilty to conspiring to violate the sanctions regime against North Korea, and awaits sentencing in your court. To give you a bit of background on my perspective, I am the father of 5, and my oldest son is the same age as Dr. V. Griffith. In fact, they were in the same Sunday School class as youngsters. I also have worked with young men and women beginning with my work with Naval Cadets at Virginia Military Institute in 1977 and continuing through my career as a professor in Higher Education until I retired in July 2017. During my career I mentored 52 Ph.D. students as their major dissertation advisor.

I have known Dr. Griffith since he was a lad of 10 years old. He is one of the brightest young men intellectually I have ever encountered. As you have observed in your years as a jurist, even bright young men can make serious errors. My observation is that the brightest are also capable of making creatively major errors. Such is the case with Dr. Griffith. I have chatted with him on occasion as he was awaiting trial. In my view, he has come to recognize that what he thought was a very minor transgression involving, from his view, information accessible to North Korea from the world wide web, was a serious major infraction of the law. Although I have not been able to talk to him in the last six months, it is my belief that he has come to be truly remorseful, not just that he got caught, but that he transgressed Federal law.

It has taken him some time to come around to seeing this reality. After dealing with undergraduate and graduate students over these many years, it has come to my attention that the men of his age group see the world quite differently than I did at their age and as I presently do as a 71.5-year-old. Some of them, like Dr. Griffith, see the world from a perspective I find hard to grasp, and they likewise see themselves differently also.

I know your time is valuable, and I appeal to your mercy. From what I can tell, Dr. Griffith is truly repentant both of his illegal action and also of his personal philosophy and egocentricism (a fault I also suffer) which led to his grave error. I believe that he has learned well the lesson that a great intellect does not exempt one from the laws of the land. Part of the point of punishment is education, and Dr. Griffith has already learned well some important lessons.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Phillip A. Bishop".

Phillip A. Bishop, Emeritus Professor of Exercise Science, U of AL



Steve Richardson & Company, P.C.
Certified Public Accountants

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Tuscaloosa, Alabama 35403
[REDACTED]

Member of the American Institute of Certified Public
Accountants and the Alabama Society of Certified Public
Accountants



March 3, 2022

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York
% Sam Meehan: smeehan@waymakerlaw.com

Dear Judge Castel:

We are Steve and Jane Richardson, married 47 years; we have 3 children and 8 grandchildren. My two oldest children grew up with Virgil.



Virgil has been a guest in our home and has always been polite and well mannered. Virgil is a delight to talk with. My passion is history. I am always surprised to discover how well read He proves to be. Virgil is far more than a Techno Geek.

Steve Richardson & Company
Letter
Page 2 of 2

Whatever philosophy or interpretation I have of history, Virgil will take a different tack. He loves being contrary. His logic is often flawless though his conclusions are not. To me and Virgil, it's not the history that's fun; it's the raucous debate.

I was able to visit with Virgil a few times while he was under house arrest. Our debates were still delightful. His intelligence and keen wit are still not dimmed. Jane and I still very much enjoy being with Virgil. But there is a deep sadness too. Virgil made a serious mistake, and he is deeply remorseful.

Virgil is very much aware that his conduct crossed a legitimate legal boundary. There is a level of remorse in Virgil that I have never seen in him.

It would be appropriate to impose the most lenient sentence permitted under the law.

Sincerely,


Steve and Jane Richardson, CPAs



— Douglas R. Hofstadter —

*College of Arts and Sciences Distinguished Professor
of Cognitive Science and Comparative Literature*

Director, Center for Research on Concepts and Cognition

Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana 47405



22 October, 2021

Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York

Concerning **United States v. Virgil Griffith — 20-CR-15 (PKC)**

Dear Judge Castel,

I am writing to you concerning the situation of Virgil Griffith. Roughly 15 years ago, Virgil was an undergraduate student in two cognitive-science courses that I taught here at Indiana University. He was a very diligent and enthusiastic student, and from that time onwards, he would occasionally drop in on me at my research center to talk about the nature of thinking and of consciousness. He had a bit of the nerd to him, in the sense of being more interested in computational technology than I was, but in compensation he had a delightful, impish sense of humor, and a certain rare brilliance that I treasured. He also was very modest, never showing off or acting superior to anyone else — just a gentle, inquisitive, creative young soul.

For a few years after he left IU, Virgil and I engaged in a lively email correspondence about various topics of mutual interest — mainly mathematics, cognitive science, and the mystery of consciousness. I still have all our emails (we exchanged around 30 of them), and enjoy rereading them, as they vividly evoke Virgil's adventurous mind and humorous spirit.

In 2013, Virgil posted on the Web a rather obscure movie called *Victim of the Brain*, which had been filmed in 1983–84 by the Dutch filmmaker Piet Hoenderdos, and which was all about my ideas on artificial intelligence, minds and machines, free will, and consciousness (which Hoenderdos was fascinated by). The film alternated between snippets of interviews with me and thought-provoking action scenes involving people, computers, robots, brains in vats, and such things. Hoenderdos had even gotten the prominent British actress Frances Barber and the world-famous philosopher of mind Daniel Dennett to play starring roles in his film. Needless to say, I think it's a fine film, and in the 1980s and 1990s, it enjoyed a bit of an underground following, but after that it mostly disappeared from view. However, Virgil's posting gave it a new life on the Web, and now it has been watched by nearly 20,000 people.

In 2015, completely out of the blue, Virgil sent me an astonishing novel called *Ship of Theseus*, which claimed to have been written by one V. M. Straka (but I think that no such person actually exists or ever existed), and which was filled to the brim (not by Virgil but by its creator) with handwritten marginal notes, inserted postcards, elegant bookmarks, torn-out newspaper clippings, folded-up maps, and a myriad other such things. I had never seen anything even remotely like this book, and Virgil had correctly intuited that it would be right up my alley, and I really appreciated this remarkable gift. He signed it to me with the simple inscription, "I thought this might tickle your fancy," and I thanked him profusely for it.

Three years later, Virgil sent me another gift out of the blue. This one was a large, heavy roundish stone with an elegantly chiseled inscription that boldly and ironically proclaimed:

"Nothing is Written in Stone". Virgil knew very well that I enjoyed self-referential jokes and paradoxes, and with this droll gift he once again hit a bull's-eye with me.

I always knew that I was in the presence of someone with rare gifts and an independent mind when I was talking with Virgil, and I knew he would explore his unusual passions to the hilt. But one day, a few months ago, as I was browsing the news on line, I was harshly shocked and deeply saddened to read that Virgil had been arrested for the unwise act of traveling to North Korea to share his knowledge about some kind of technology. I instantly recalled Virgil's persistent warmth and kindness to me, and was utterly bewildered that this dismal fate had befallen my former student, enthusiastic reader, and cherished friend. Perhaps I shouldn't say that this fate had "befallen" him, since it was Virgil's own actions rather than some external force that had brought it about, but I knew that whatever he had done had been done for some kind of idealistic reasons, whether I would fathom them or not. I knew Virgil was someone who thought in idiosyncratic ways, and who wished only the best for the world. I had never seen him do a mean or cruel thing to anyone at any time. And so, all I could do was reel in pain for him.

I have not been in touch with Virgil for several years now, but I still remember him with enormous fondness and admiration. I realize that he has violated the law and that he will have to pay for his serious misdeed, but I hope that you will recognize in him an individual of genuine good will and benevolence, who was led astray by confused ideals, but who has great gifts and a tremendous potential to contribute positively to the world. In a word, I hope you will look upon Virgil with lenience and understanding. I am not saying that his actions are to be pardoned or condoned; I am only saying that in my opinion, he is a first-rate human being, and deserves a second chance. It would be tragic if such a fine and bright young soul were to rot away in jail.

Sincerely yours,

Douglas R. Hofstadter

P.S. — It was suggested to me that I might add a few sentences to identify myself, so here they are. I was born in Manhattan in 1945, but was raised largely on the Stanford campus, where my Dad was a professor of physics (he won a Nobel Prize in 1961). I majored in math at Stanford, graduating with Distinction in 1965, then did two years of graduate work in math at Berkeley, and finally got a Ph.D. in theoretical physics from the University of Oregon in 1975. I became an assistant professor of computer science at Indiana University (Bloomington) in 1977, and over the years migrated into cognitive science and eventually the study of translation as well. I was lured away to the University of Michigan in 1984 (where I was given a chaired professorship), but in 1988 I returned to IU, where I had always felt extremely warmly welcomed.

I have written books on such varied topics as consciousness, minds and machines, language, translation, analogy-making, and more, and some have garnered honors, such as *Gödel, Escher, Bach: an Eternal Golden Braid*, which in 1980 won the Pulitzer Prize for general nonfiction. I was elected a member of the American Philosophical Society (founded in Philly in 1743 by Benjamin Franklin), and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences (founded in Boston in 1780). At age 76, I'm still teaching at IU, and still busy writing books. I'm a distant cousin to the famous late historian Richard Hofstadter (who beat me hands down in the Pulitzer Prize department, winning two of them!), and also of the late Judge Samuel Hofstadter, who for 37 years served as a Justice on the State Supreme Court of New York. I don't know if you've ever heard of Judge Hofstadter, but he was quite respected in his day. Lastly, a piece of amusing trivia about myself: my book *Fluid Concepts and Creative Analogies* was the first item ever sold by Amazon, back in 1995. So in a certain sense, one could say that I (or my book) launched Jeff Bezos into the stratosphere!

Daniel Bishop

██████████
Madison, AL 35758

Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

Bottom-Line Up Front: As a friend who has known Virgil Griffith for decades, I humbly and respectfully request the the lowest sentence permitted under the law.

My name is Daniel Bishop. I am an engineer. I have worked in the United States Defense Industry on-and-off over the last 20 years, totaling about seven years as a DoD civilian and another five as a contractor, where I am today. The remaining balance of that time was spent in undergraduate and graduate school.

I have known Virgil Griffith for almost thirty years and consider him a friend. We met at church in 1992 while we were still in elementary school, suffered through church youth group together (neither of us were good at relating to our peers), and lived in the same dorm at the University of Alabama.

During the years that I have known Virgil, I have consistently found him to be curious, intelligent, and always interesting. He is a very analytical person with a unique perspective. If he has an opinion, he can usually support it pretty well. In our childhood we bonded over a shared interest in computers, video games, science fiction, puzzles, and competitive strategy games. In tenth grade I had an assignment to write about the most interesting person I knew, so I wrote a paper about Virgil. I don't have a copy of it anymore. I am sure it was terrible.

I have never known Virgil to be violent, outside of childhood wrestling matches. I have never known him to express any desire to harm the United States or jeopardize the nation's security in any way. I have never known him to express any admiration for any oppressive, totalitarian regime, including that of North Korea. I have never known him to express any desire to harm anyone.

When I was about twenty years old, I had the opportunity to visit Cuba (still headed by Fidel Castro) through an official student program at the University of Alabama. At that time there were no official relations between the United States and Cuba, but there was some exception carved out for academics. I was a co-op working for the Department of Defense in Maryland. I called the security office at my agency and asked them if I could go. They told me I could, but if I did I could not come back to work at the agency.

I chose not to go.

I don't regret my choice. Working for the DoD was, overall, really good for me and my family. But I still wish I had been able to see Cuba with my own eyes.

Virgil faced a parallel situation with much higher stakes. He made a different choice, the wrong choice, and has gotten himself into a lot of trouble. He is still paying the price for that. Through his time in house arrest he has also been seeing first-hand the toll this has been taking on his parents.

On behalf of Virgil, his family, his other friends, and myself, I humbly and respectfully request that you impose the lowest sentence permitted under the law.

Thank you very much for your time.

Sincerely,

Daniel Bishop

Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Your Honor,

I am writing to ask for leniency in your sentencing for Virgil Griffith.

I'm a weekly mass-going Catholic, married, father of six, living in South Carolina, and I work as Director of Operations of True Names LTD, the non-profit that develops the blockchain project Ethereum Name Service (ENS; <https://ens.domains>).

I have been close friends with Virgil since mid-2019 (before his legal troubles), and through his legal troubles up to the present, though I was acquainted with him for years before that. I met him as a colleague working on ENS but we quickly became good friends personally, with common interests in technology, philosophy, and religion.

He's a rare combination of both very high intelligence and kindness. He's never struck me as a particularly political person, but rather a curious person who wants to build cool things and help people. He's also a trusted and respected member of the Ethereum community, and his absence the last two years has been a loss for the community.

I know he's plead guilty to a serious federal crime. I ask that you please impose the lowest possible sentence under the law.

Brantly Millegan

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brantly Millegan', with a stylized, cursive script.

October 29, 2021

Larry S. Yaeger

[REDACTED]
Bloomington, IN 47401
[REDACTED]

Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

October 31, 2021

Dear Your Honor,

I write in support of leniency for Virgil Griffith, a former student and scientific collaborator of mine. While I was a professor in the School of Informatics at Indiana University, Virgil reached out to me to have conversations both technical and personal. I enjoyed these conversations and recognized Virgil's intelligence and enthusiasm for science in general and my research area in particular, so it wasn't long before we began collaborating on that research, producing two key research papers that set the course and tone of my research for most of a decade.

For the record, besides my time in academia, I worked in aerospace engineering at Grumman and Rocketdyne, performed ONR-funded research into submarine detection for Poseidon Research (where I held a SECRET/SH clearance), created pioneering computer graphics special effects for film and television at Digital Productions, worked for Apple Computer for 19 years, and Google for 6 years. I have extensive personal experience as both an individual contributor and an executive with very intelligent, very motivated scientists and engineers, and I can unambiguously state that Virgil is one of the best of these. Not only are his technical skills superb, he also is one of the most creative, innovative, and ethical individuals I have worked with.

Virgil has a remarkable ability to see and create truly innovative solutions to problems, often before others have even perceived the existence of the problem. You may already be aware of these matters, given your role in Virgil's trial, but I hope it is worth mentioning just a few of his deeply ethical contributions along these lines, where his work in computer security and web ethics have already had substantial impacts. He discovered and documented security problems with widely used campus ID cards. He demonstrated novel (and disconcerting) methods of obtaining seemingly private information, such as mothers' maiden names, from publicly available records. Virgil achieved some fame as the author of WikiScanner, and then WikiScanner2—web sites that allow discovery of biased editing of Wikipedia articles, such as when Exxon Mobile added that the Valdez oil spill had “no long term severe impact”, or Pepsi removed an entire section entitled “long term health effects”. In every case, Virgil acted to protect society and innocents from malicious actors.

In addition, knowing Virgil's ongoing contributions to science and society, through his work with me, his neuroscience and consciousness work with Christof Koch and Giulio Tononi, and his block-chain theoretical and practical work with Ethereum, there is no question in my mind that it would do society more harm than good to lock him away where those contributions would necessarily stop. Virgil knows he made a mistake, and is sorry for it. There is no chance he would do something like this again. So anything more than the most lenient sentence would be purely punitive, with no change in Virgil's subsequent behavior, as well as being damaging to society. Please be as lenient as you conscientiously can be.

Sincerely yours,

Larry S. Yaeger

**Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York**

**United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)**

Dear Judge Castel,

I've known Virgil Griffith for nearly 20 years. From the beginning, he struck me as an incredibly intelligent person who was intensely curious about everything ranging from the profound to the mundane.

I've been the publisher of *2600 Magazine* since 1984. Our target audience can be defined as misfits, people who are looking for a place in a world that often doesn't see their value. Over time, I have met some of the most intellectually gifted and challenged people in the world of technology and security. Virgil fits both of these categories, as do many in this community who show signs of autism while possessing an incredible ability to gather knowledge.

In the early 1980s, I found myself in a similar position, having explored without authorization a number of computer systems in a pre-Internet world. I didn't deny what I did and I was fortunate enough to be allowed to speak with both law enforcement and system administrators to help improve security. That one decision to give me a second chance changed my life and I've been working ever since to help keep people with similar interests from going down the wrong path. Coordinating the magazine, as well as hosting radio shows and conferences, has helped to open doors for these gifted people. Virgil is precisely that type of person and his academic and intellectual accomplishments over the years have helped to inspire others.

Virgil loves nothing more than a challenge. But he sometimes gets so caught up in trying to figure out a problem that he loses track of the world around him. I too had visited North Korea a number of years ago as a tourist and had described it to him as the closest thing to visiting another planet, albeit one with absurd beliefs and customs. I have no doubt that this sparked a curiosity in him that he couldn't quell and I will forever regret not seeing the warning signs that he was losing touch with reality and seeing something extremely serious as some kind of adventure. I feel I should have done more to see if he was crossing any lines in his quest.

The knowledge that Virgil has to share is immense, particularly for all that he has yet to contribute. He has received the message in no uncertain terms as to how he violated the law and wandered into a very dangerous area. I will never believe he meant to cause any harm but there is no denying that it was an incredibly foolish course of action on his part. Nobody knows that more than him and I know it's tearing him apart. But I can also say unequivocally that Virgil doesn't need to be told twice when he's done something wrong. Given the opportunity, I believe he will work hard to ensure that others don't make similar mistakes, as that is the nature of his personality.

Eric Corley

Publisher, 2600 Magazine (www.2600.com)

Coordinator, HOPE Conferences (www.hope.net)

Host, “Off The Hook” radio show on WBAI 99.5 FM, New York City

Bob Reid
CEO, Everest
San Diego, CA 92128

November 12, 2021

Re: States v. Dr. Virgil Griffith, 20-CR-15 (PKC)

To the Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York:

Dear Judge Castel,

I am writing on behalf of Dr. Virgil Griffith, a colleague and friend of mine for the past 4+ years. I am aware of his guilty plea to a serious federal crime, which has not changed my opinion of him; ironically, through his remorse, and self-reflection (he is acutely aware that he brought this on himself), I've grown to respect him even more.

During these past two years, I've explained Virgil and his folly to my teenage children with the following comparison, "Think of Will, Matt Damon's character, from the movie Good Will Hunting: stratospherically high IQ with a deep understanding of complex systems, yet on a non-traditional path. Virgil chose a path that led him to a mistake, yet, like Will, he's one worth saving.....as an ex-Director of the Santa Fe Institute put it to me in 2018, 'Virgil has such deep capacity, he is one of the unique Americans we need to lead the US into the future.' The blockchain space currently makes a lot of people feel like the future is malleable, and they sometimes forget that the present is still governed by laws. Caught up in the 'blockchain culture', Virgil momentarily forgot about the present in an effort to make the future a better place."

Over course of our relationship, I've personally experienced numerous instances of Virgil's moral compass, honesty, dedication and patriotism. For example, Virgil's guidance on Everest over the years demonstrated prioritization of users and clients (banks and governments) over Everest itself, stating "if you just do the 'right thing' by those who use the Everest platform, the relationship of trust will pay dividends beyond any short-term gain." Similarly, I've seen Virgil selflessly, with no benefit to himself, help the younger generation, supplying reading lists, commentary, introductions, advice, etc. - always nudging them to follow the golden rule and just "do the right thing". And when many in the blockchain community openly discussed attaining new nationalities, (he and I discussed this subject in depth), he quickly showed his heart is still in Alabama and the US.

I implore you to show the most lenient sentence possible for Virgil. Should you have any questions regarding my assessment of Virgil's character, please feel free to reach out.

Sincerely,

Bob Reid
CEO, Everest



United States v. Virgil Griffith 20-CR-15 (PKC)

**Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York**

Dear Your Honor,

My name is Eva Beylin, I am from Toronto, Canada and currently reside in Seattle, Washington. I was born to Russian immigrants who came to Canada as refugees from communism in the former Soviet Union. I studied global economics, business and Spanish at Ivey Business School in Canada and I'm quatra-lingual. I began my career as a management consultant at the globally renowned firm A.T Kearney in Toronto and New York for clients in health care, insurance, payments, retail and more. I am passionate about problem solving, however it became clear to me that consulting for large and corrupt corporations was not my end goal and thus I found Ethereum. I soon became so enthralled by the goal of creating equitable access to technology and payments and couldn't stay away, so I began to work in the Ethereum industry. That's where I met Virgil Griffith.

With my background in payments and having clients like The Clearing House, I wanted to leverage my experience to help Ethereum grow and gain adoption. Upon interviewing for various startups I was lucky enough to meet Vitalik Buterin, the Creator of Ethereum when I wrote an economic paper on what Ethereum could do to enable more equitable payments services, like remittances, access to financial services and more fair credit scoring globally. He and others at the Ethereum Foundation liked it so much they introduced me to OmiseGO - a payments company that was a vessel for experimenting with a lot of early Ethereum infrastructure. Virgil worked closely with OmiseGO as part of the Ethereum Foundation and was one of my early supporters and educators on Ethereum when I onboarded in early 2018. I remember him specifically teaching me about his vision for making Ethereum as credibly neutral and accepted as possible, and ensuring it wasn't offensive or misunderstood by any religions and inclusive to all. At the time he was actively working on ensure Ethereum (and the asset Ether) were sharia law compliant so that 1.8 billion Muslim people would not be restricted from using Ethereum and having access to this new decentralized system.

While I was working in Bangkok, Virgil was based in Singapore and led Special Projects at the Ethereum Foundation (EF). The EF is the non-profit foundation that represents the public well-being and interests of the Ethereum ecosystem, technology and security, and Ethereum's goals are to provide public goods as well as private markets to the world in an equitable fashion. OmiseGO (myself and other researchers) worked closely with the Ethereum Foundation on special initiatives, mechanism design and thinking about how we could grow this technology beyond a few nerdy people.

Other initiatives we worked on were the Ethereum Community Fund - a community fund encouraging collaboration between different blockchain protocols. Even when the Ethereum mainnet forked (split) into two communities because of technological differences, Virgil focused a lot of his energy on making sure these two communities could stay mutually aligned and gave speeches about "positive sum games" between the two because he strongly believed positive sum games were possible, even with capitalist incentives at play. He was always a peacemaker regardless of the circumstances. It just wasn't his philosophy to see any kind of war or conflict where there otherwise was a possibility for peace. Virgil saw Ethereum as the avenue to peace and "blockchain and peace" was a recurring theme throughout his speeches, workshops and

ideology for several years. He also worked closely with the Internet Archive and EFF to ensure equitable internet practices were being adopted by the Ethereum community and moderated the latest ethereum research forum ethresear.ch where he provided ideas on open sourcing critical privacy and scaling infrastructure.

Virgil and I were in the same Ethereum family. There weren't many of us - 10 maximum - who for whatever reason very connected together, part of the same traveling group of gypsies that would traverse the world trying to educate developers and business people about the power of Ethereum to take down global corruption. We made up members of the Ethereum Foundation, Core Ethereum Researchers, members of OmiseGO and others. Our lives whether personal or professional were 100% dedicated to Ethereum and bringing it to life. We would meet up frequently whether in Bangkok where we had research session with our community colleagues, a hackathon or workshop to do or simply to meet up with members of the family. Off memory, we met up in Singapore, Bangkok, Prague, New York, Toronto, San Francisco and other cities.

Your Honor I hope that it is palpable the commitment that early Ethereum contributors had to propagating the mission of a free-er society where individuals can have more rights to their data, assets and more access, rather than being censored or restrained by large corporations and internet monopolies. Virgil and I shared that vision. After OmiseGO I transitioned to working full-time at the Ethereum Foundation where Virgil and I overlapped slightly on various community initiatives including a survey I ran to get on-the-ground perspectives from the people about the fairness of the Ethereum technical governance process. It was always imperative to Virgil, Vitalik and others that Ethereum not develop a governance system that was easily attackable by money or influence and rather would enable more technology and people-driven decision making. I continue to work in the Ethereum space today, driving this mission in web3 and focusing on equitable data access through open source APIs because no organization should be able to tell the people what data they can or can't access, if its built on a public chain like Ethereum.

I understand the seriousness of Virgil's actions and that Virgil failed to abide by various legal and social contracts, however I sincerely request Your Honor, that you consider giving Virgil the most lenient sentence the Court considers to be appropriate or lowest sentence permitted under the law. I believe Virgil is a good man and as you can see throughout his history of special projects, he has carried the thread of prioritizing unity, bringing diverging cultures and causes together, with the overarching goal of peace and equity. He is a curious mind who is committed to inclusivity, and saw global warfare as something that Ethereum could help fix, albeit sometimes he took it too far.

I believe that Virgil has great remorse for his behaviors and was carried away in the revolutionary spirit that led him to be ungrounded in some of his efforts. I believe that he did and continues to mean well in helping resolve global conflict.

It is greatly appreciated that you would take the time to read this letter and I hope you take my sincere request to heart.

Best Regards,

Eva Beylin



United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York

Dear Judge Castel, my name is Eduardo da Veiga Beltrame. I recently defended my PhD in bioengineering at Caltech, and I am now part of the founding team of Retro Biosciences, a research-focused startup developing therapies for age related diseases, utilizing the technologies I worked with during my PhD research at Caltech.

I first met Virgil during the second year of my PhD program. As a Caltech alum, Virgil reached out to current Caltech students to help organize a talk on research opportunities and grants related to the Ethereum blockchain. Caltech is quite a special place when it comes to attracting and fostering unique smart people (it is the institution with the highest number of Nobel Laureates per capita in the world), and Virgil exemplifies that. Beyond giving a fascinating talk and galvanizing interest from the research community, I had the opportunity to spend a few days with Virgil around campus, and to become very good friends with the other students who shared this interest in blockchain research.

Such was the impact of Virgil's talk that Austin Liu, one of the students that helped me organize the talk (and with whom I became good friends), ended up wrapping his Caltech masters in Physics and switching to doing cryptography research. He recently obtained another masters, from Cornell University, while doing cryptography research. Since that first meeting I had the opportunity to interact with Virgil in person a couple other times, whenever he visited Caltech, always introducing him to other Caltech students or professors who might be interested in working in cryptography research.

Virgil's work with the Ethereum blockchain aims to create new frameworks to enable cooperative arrangements for interactions between individuals, institutions, governments and societies. I became enamored with that vision and the possibilities such frameworks can enable. Although it is not clear that it will be successful, I think Virgil's research and work are extremely important for the future of societies, because they ask: How can we cooperate more, and how can we cooperate more efficiently, while leveraging new kinds of decentralized technologies.

I am hopeful that you may keep the importance of Virgil's work and research in mind when evaluating his case, and that it may be possible to impose a suitably lenient sentence.

Thank you for your time,
Eduardo da Veiga Beltrame



GEORGETOWN LAW

Matt Blaze

Robert L. McDevitt, K.S.G., K.C.H.S. and
Catherine H. McDevitt L.C.H.S. Chair
Professor of Law and Computer Science

**United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)**

24 December 2021

The Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court for the Southern District of New York

Dear Judge Castel,

I am writing to urge you to consider extending strong leniency in sentencing Virgil Griffith in the above referenced matter. I am grateful for the opportunity to provide my perspective to the Court. I am, by training, a computer scientist who studies cryptography, computer security, complex systems, and the intersection of technology and public policy. Among my professional interests are digital currency and transaction systems. For example, in 2002 I chaired the “Financial Cryptography” conference, perhaps the main international scientific venue at which research in cryptocurrency is published. I have a PhD in computer science from Princeton University, and have been an active researcher for about 30 years. In 2019, I joined the faculty at Georgetown for a joint professorship in computer science and law, where I teach and publish in both disciplines, particularly on issues at the intersection of technology and policy and law. (I am not, however, an attorney). Prior to joining Georgetown, I served as a professor in the computer science department at the University of Pennsylvania.

My interests in this case are twofold. First, as you might imagine from my background, the conduct for which Mr. Griffith is to be sentenced is of direct relevance to my field of study and to the scientific research community that I inhabit. Second, I know Virgil personally. I have met him numerous times at professional and technical events and am familiar with his work and contributions, and I believe I can provide some insight into his character and state of mind.

Let me address Mr. Griffith first. From the time I first met him well over a decade ago, Virgil immediately struck me as an intensely smart person (even in a field in which that is not at all unusual) driven by curiosity above all else. He has an almost naive tenacity in his approach to understanding and solving problems, often to the exclusion of everything else when a subject interests him. These are not especially uncommon characteristics among scientists and technology researchers (indeed, they are what I look for in graduate students), but Virgil stands out as being on the extreme end of this spectrum. Yet despite this focus, I have always known him as unfailingly considerate of others and generous with his time and energy. He is a valuable colleague and contributor. But his laser focus can sometimes distract him from the larger implications and consequences of his work. It is very easy to see how his strong tendency to focus narrowly could lead him into trouble, which I have no doubt he now regrets.

The mere fact that Mr. Griffith has been prosecuted and pled guilty has already sent an extremely strong, clear message to the scholarly and technical community about where the lines are and the consequences of violating them. Mr Griffith has pled guilty to a felony, itself a sanction that will have lifelong consequences for him. I strongly believe that a lengthy term of imprisonment would be unnecessarily punitive and counterproductive to the interests of justice. Even the lightest possible sentence would still achieve a very strong deterrent effect on those who might find themselves in a position to commit similar crimes.

I know that sentencing is an extremely difficult task even in the clearest cases, and Mr. Griffith's is an extraordinary and unusual case. I hope the court will exercise its discretion in imposing the lowest possible penalty.

Thank you for considering this perspective. If I can provide any additional information, please feel free to contact me.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Matt Blaze', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Matt Blaze

**Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York**

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

My name is Althea Allen and I am employed with the Ethereum Foundation, working with the grants team in a communications role. I first met Virgil through colleagues in the Ethereum ecosystem in 2017. He became a coworker of mine when I joined the Ethereum Foundation in 2019, and I considered him a valued colleague.

Virgil was always kind, generous and welcoming to me as a newcomer to the industry. As I got to know him over the next couple of years, I also came to see him as exceptionally creative and driven by a deep commitment to changing the world for the better. I count him as one of the people in the Ethereum community who helped to ignite in me a sense and purpose and possibility that I had not experienced in any previous career.

I am aware that Virgil has pleaded guilty to a federal crime. I also believe he regrets his actions, and request that you impose the most lenient sentence permitted under the law.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Althea', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Althea Allen

**Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York**

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

I'm an Ethereum researcher from Taiwan. I have been working with the Ethereum Foundation since the end of 2017 and my Ethereum career almost started with meeting Virgil Griffith.

Back in November 2017, I was invited to the Ethereum annual developer conference in Cancun and also joined an Airbnb research retreat with Ethereum researchers. The living room has a big window that faces the Mexican sea views and a swimming pool outside. There are some Taiwanese friends already joined the research team but I haven't yet. I learned from them the team has a new researcher, Virgil, who has a website listing his brain scans, a link to his IMDB profile, and two doctoral degrees. The researchers in the room were busy with some difficult technical challenges, and then he walked in from the sea view and the swimming pool and greeted us.

Despite his achievement and experience in academics, he hasn't played the rock star research role like deriving maths on a whiteboard. He is competent but he enjoys being a supporter more. He set up the email addresses for us, surveyed digital tools we use, hired talents, and things that people are too busy to do.

At a Cancun restaurant, he asked us what can he do for the Taiwanese researchers to make our lives better. We were working remotely, so I proposed that a place to work would be nice. After that talk, he's been reaching out to contacts in Taiwan and helping us find a suitable place to work. We've been meeting different people and places, from a famous tech company that has spare desks with coffee to an unused classroom in university. We finally settled in a coworking space and we thanked Virgil for the effort. He also encouraged us to ask for a raise.

The Ethereum communities in Taiwan hosted small conferences sometimes and we invited Virgil and other researchers to Taiwan. Virgil never hesitates for my invitation to Taiwan. He didn't bring enough local money and I shared some with him. But at the dinner, he insist he'd like to pay for the dinner too.

We moved to some other coworking spaces for different reasons, and during the covid, we eventually worked from home. I've contacted Virgil in custody through email. The very first things he asked are about the office and some other Taiwan contact he was helping before his arrest. Virgil is warm, kind, and think of other people's need before his, even when he is in a difficult situation.

Virgil invited me for some travels from time to time. He invited the Taiwanese researchers to Singapore where he shared an office with some other startup team. He gave us a tour of the office and taught me how to play his skateboard. He learned that I didn't have a hardware wallet and gave me one he just got as a gift. He also gave me one of his name cards that is made of steel and has his PGP key on it. He also invited my former college to Singapore to present his work at an open-source software conference in some other travel.

Virgil invited me to Philippine to meet the local community there. We gave our presentation and enjoyed the beach and the bar at Boracay.

Virgil made a very serious mistake. But he is kind and a person of love. Among all the people I worked with, he is a rare American that showed so much care and engagement to the people in Asia. Even if he or I am not in the industry, he is still someone I'd like to make friends with. Dear Judge Castel, please be lenient on Virgil's sentence.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chih Cheng Liang". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first and last names being more prominent than the middle name.

Chih-Cheng Liang

**Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York**

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

My name is Hsiao-Wei Wang, a Taiwanese blockchain researcher and software developer. I have known Virgil since I joined Ethereum Foundation in 2017.

Virgil has close ties to the global community of Ethereum developers and researchers. Many of his friends were heartbroken when we heard his news. I know Virgil has been deeply regretful and remorseful for taking his trip to the DPRK.

Virgil was not only a colleague but also a sincere friend to me. He has the brilliant mind to make the world better. He has the ability to make people around him happy. He has the kindness to share what he has. I truly think the world would be less productive and vivid without his participation.

For example, Virgil largely contributed to the blockchain system evolvement. Ethereum blockchain will deprecate the electronic wasteful "mining" next year and enormously save energy waste. One of the core designs of this upgrade is based on the paper [Casper the Friendly Finality Gadget, 2017] that Virgil participated. I believe that he will make more positive contributions to the world when he is released, and with that in mind, respectfully ask you to consider a lenient sentence.

It is my sincere hope the court considers this letter at the time of sentencing. Virgil has some flaws and was foolish at that time, but I still believe Virgil is an incredible innovator, a valuable community member, and a good person.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hsiao-Wei Wang". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Hsiao-Wei Wang

**Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York**

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

With sincere humbleness I write you this letter to speak up for my colleague Virgil Griffith.

I've known of Virgil since my university studies as in my circles he was seen as likely one of the new pioneers. A figure whom we considered to be once as renowned as people like Robert Kahn and Vint Cerf (developers of the fundamental protocols that gave rise to the Internet) or David Chaum (the developer of digital cash), leaving his mark in history. At that time, I never even dreamt of actually meeting any of the technological prodigies and it wasn't until 2018 when I had the pleasure to talk to Virgil during a developer conference in Prague.

We've spent several hours together with other attendees and mentors discussing merits of various projects and it soon became obvious to me that he is one of the people I'd enjoy working with. Despite him already being known in the industry, having an influential aura, and me being a 'nobody', he was very approachable and friendly. From the first moment of meeting him, it was clear that he has a deep understanding and passion for what blockchain and smartcontracts can provide to society.

My interaction with Virgil was so convincing that it became one of the deciding factors for me to leave the company I started while studying to be able to fully dive into Ethereum. Later that year I finally joined the Ethereum Foundation, where we became colleagues.

Within the Ethereum Foundation I was very fortunate to be exposed to many very bright minds and to be able to learn from them. With most of them however I never came across such openness as with Virgil. Talking with him, I never felt like my occasional lack of technical understanding was blocking our conversation. I never felt like I'm asking a stupid question since Virgil would always be forthcoming of my knowledge gaps and would explain even fundamental concepts from areas I wasn't fond of. He truly was dedicated to reaching understanding even at the expense of his own time and I'm very thankful to him for every minute he has spent on explaining things to me.

Your Honor, I know that Virgil pleaded guilty to his crime - and I also know he regrets the choices he has made. The Virgil I know was always kind and well intended and I feel it's my duty to him as the human being I admire and heartily miss to ask you to please be lenient with him.

Best regards,

Josef Jelacic 

**Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York**

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

My name is Martin Holst Swende. I am a Swedish programmer / computer security professional, who for the last five years have been working at the Ethereum Foundation to improve infrastructure- and user security on the Ethereum blockchain.

My professional background, briefly, is that I was co-founder of a startup which was acquired by Yahoo Inc in 2008, after which I left Yahoo in 2010 to become an application security consultant but eventually joined Nasdaq OMX in 2014 after having worked extensively within the Swedish financial sector.

I first came in contact with Virgil in 2018, when he was working on 'special projects' within Ethereum Foundation. He was pursuing various initiatives including things like getting the Ethereum blockchain declared Halal, coordinating with the ETC fork of Ethereum, getting AWS/Cloudflare/Google/Microsoft to support the foundation with free cloud computing resources, and having a port officially registered for Ethereum clients, in the IETF specifications.

These ideas have a very wide range, from very societal level to esoteric technical details, but the common factor to them all is that they arose out of Virgil so inherently being a communicator. To my mind, Virgil is a bridge of gaps, who always strives to communicate with "the other group" -- regardless of whether the "gap" is between technologists with different view on tech, or whether it is between different cultural groups.

In October 2019, me and Virgil were attending an Ethereum conference in Osaka, and took some time off to visit the Osaka Aquarium. He told me about various different topics he was working on, and, on a whim, bought a huge plush seal for a friend, one which would be a huge effort to transport back home.

My impression of Virgil is that he will always, if given a choice, take the chance to seek people out and communicate. And he will always act with his heart, where others would give pause and think. This is not borne out of him fighting against authority, or any antisocial behaviour, but rather the opposite -- his extremely social bridge-building behaviour.

I hope that the court import the lowest appropriate sentence for the crimes which Virgil has committed, as I strongly feel that Virgil is a force for good in this world.

Best regards,



Martin Holst Swende

**Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York**

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

My name is Piper Merriam. I have known and worked with Virgil as a colleague since 2015.

The Virgil that I know is kind and generous. He is an odd person and I very much like odd people. Virgil would regularly go out of his way to learn about what things I was working on and to assist me with them in whatever ways he was able. He was always warm and welcoming and trying to do good in the world.

I understand that Virgil has pleaded guilty to a Federal crime. While I recognize the seriousness of this matter, I continue to respect and admire Virgil as a person who I believe is good and full of potential. I have not had any opportunity to speak with Virgil about this matter, but I would expect him to have recognized the magnitude of the choices he made and to have learned from them.

I ask that you consider leniency and mercy during sentencing. I believe Virgil has a lot left to contribute to this world and I ask that you consider giving him the opportunity to atone for his mistakes.

Best regards,

Piper Merriam

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Piper Merriam', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York**

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

My name is Skylar Weaver, and I am a former work colleague of Virgil Griffith.

I'll never forget the first time I met Virgil — smiling, welcoming, and (in his usual goofy lighthearted way) wearing bright silver reflective leggings and an equally-exotic space-cat t-shirt. It was at an annual Ethereum technical developers conference in Mexico, which was my first experience in the Ethereum community — a community which, partially thanks to Virgil, I have continued to work in to this day.

Virgil was perhaps the first person I met in the community that asked me why I was interested in Ethereum and what world-improving aspect of it most resonated with me. It was clear to me then — and still is — that Virgil just wants to make the world a better place.

All of that said, I do understand that he has pleaded guilty to a federal crime. I also must say that notwithstanding this grave mistake, I continue to respect him and believe that his aim has always been to better the world for all those of us on it. It is with this in mind that I kindly ask you Your Honor Judge Castel to please consider the most lenient sentence the Court considers to be appropriate.

If there's one thing Virgil is never short on, it's idea. Ideas often around how we can collectively make our world a better place. I'm confident that given a more lenient sentence, Virgil will use the time granted to truly improve our world.

Thank you for your time and consideration Judge Castel.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'S. Weaver'.

Skylar Weaver

**Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York**

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

I am writing to urge leniency in the sentencing of my former colleague, Virgil Griffith.

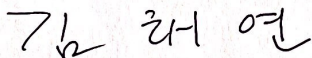
I have known Virgil since 2018 when I joined the Ethereum Foundation as a country manager in South Korea. I met him in person several times at blockchain conferences in Seoul. He is a passionate and kind-hearted man who is always open to meeting local developers and encouraging them to adopt new technologies. Even though he is a famous figure in the community, he never feels tired of listening to other people's thoughts and embracing diverse ideas.

I am aware of the gravity of the crime to which he has pleaded guilty, and it is still hard for me to wrap my head around why he would do something so risky. He is a man who is humble and respectful to everyone around him, especially those who have difficulties learning blockchain. I was deeply moved by his patience and kindness when he spent hours teaching me the technical aspects of Ethereum. Although my English is not sufficiently fluent, making communication difficult at times, he patiently listened to my struggles and gave considerate advice whenever I needed support. Without him, I wouldn't have been able to adjust to my new position at the foundation.

It is my sincere hope the Court takes this letter into consideration at the time of sentencing. Despite the current case, I still believe Virgil Griffith to be a good human being who made an irreparable mistake out of ignorance. He is genuinely remorseful and contrite about what he had done. Your honor, please kindly show mercy on him and impose the most lenient sentence the Court considers to be appropriate.

Thank you.

Best regards,



Taeyeon Kim

**Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York**

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

I have known Virgil Griffith for approximately 4 years, initially through mutual friends, and later as a co-worker. I have found him to be an exceptionally brilliant and talented person, with great passion and ability. He is virtual fountain of new and unique ideas, particularly when it comes to solving technical problems. I have also found him to be kind, trustworthy, and benevolent, often offering to help people solve problems or get things done. Despite his brilliance, he can sometimes be naïve regarding the ways of the world outside of his areas of expertise, and I believe it is this which led to his poor judgment in deciding to travel to North Korea. I feel certain that he never intended harm to anyone, and I know that he deeply regrets his ill-considered actions. I do not believe that a harsh punishment would serve the interests of justice, the public, or him, so I urge you to be as lenient as possible in sentencing.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tas Dienes', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Tas Dienes

**Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York**

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

My name is Tju Liang Chua, and I am the general counsel for the Ethereum Foundation. I write respectfully to share a personal perspective about Virgil Griffith for Your Honor's consideration ahead of his upcoming sentencing.

I first met Virgil in 2017 in Singapore. Virgil inspired me with his sense of optimism and commitment to making the world a better place. He was one of the key people responsible for me joining the Ethereum Foundation. I count him not only as a valued colleague, but as a true and sincere friend.

In my interactions with Virgil, he has always been unfailingly kind and compassionate. And in the many projects that Virgil initiated, a common thread was his desire to build bridges, for the sake of cooperation among people from different backgrounds and spaces.

Working with Virgil, and seeing his efforts, left me with a lasting sense of hope for our world.

I know that Virgil deeply regrets his actions, and understands the gravity of his mistakes. He is eager to once again get a chance to contribute to society, and I would truly appreciate him being given an opportunity to do so.

Yours faithfully



Tju Liang Chua

**Honorable P. Kevin Castel
United States District Court
for the Southern District of New York**

United States v. Virgil Griffith
20-CR-15 (PKC)

Dear Judge Castel,

This letter concerns my relationship with Virgil Griffith. I write to respectfully request leniency from Your Honor at his upcoming sentencing.

I have been a member of the Ethereum community since 2016. Currently, I work with the Ethereum Foundation as Ecosystem Liaison. In this position, I maintain contact with a number of stakeholder groups, including users, applications, and the maintainers of the protocol.

Previously, I worked in the field of architecture. This profession is very different from the self directed, open-source developer culture that permeates Ethereum. During my transition into this new space, I reached out to Virgil many times as a resource. He was generous with his time, always willing to answer my questions or direct me to the person able to. Even though I was very new to the ecosystem, I always felt treated as his peer community member. Throughout our relationship, he was thoughtful, kind and personable. He even made time to meet in person at a developer event in May 2019, where we spoke for a few hours about the ecosystem and the exciting growth it was experiencing. His sincerity and commitment to building tools of positive global impact was incredibly present during those few hours.

Ethereum today is an important part of my professional and personal life: similarly, Virgil was an important part of that journey.

I did not see Virgil again until I saw him plead guilty in your courtroom last September. Compared to our previous interaction, there was a marked difference in his demeanor. He had slumped shoulders and a shaky voice, but his words were clear in their acknowledgement of guilt. From everything I could see and hear, he fully understood the gravity of his situation, and the consequences of his actions in North Korea. His regret for having taken that path was very apparent.

Even though he ended up pleading guilty to what is a federal crime, I fully retain my respect for him as an early builder in the ecosystem. As the presiding authority in this case, I hope you will recommend the lowest sentence permitted under law. Any sentence Your Honor might impose would be more than enough to leave him with a new perspective, chastened by the experience. He has a wonderful builder's mind that the world would be lesser for in its absence.

I hope these words adequately communicate my perspective on who Virgil was, and who he might be in the future.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Trenton Van Epps', with a stylized, cursive script.

Trenton Van Epps